

Absolutism in Western Europe: c. 1589-1715

I. Absolutism:

- A. Derived from the traditional assumption of power (e.g. heirs to the throne) and the belief in "divine right of kings"
- Louis XIV of France was the quintessential absolute monarch
- B. Characteristics of western European absolutism
1. Sovereignty of a country was embodied in the person of the ruler
 2. Absolute monarchs were not subordinate to national assemblies
 3. The nobility was effectively brought under control
 - a. This is in contrast to eastern European absolutism where the nobility remained powerful
 - b. The nobility could still at times prevent absolute monarchs from completely having their way
 4. Bureaucracies in the 17th century were often composed of career officials appointed by and solely accountable to the king
 - Often were rising members of the bourgeoisie or the new nobility ("nobility of the robe" who purchased their titles from the monarchy)
 5. French and Spanish monarchies gained effective control of the Roman Catholic Church in their countries
 6. Maintained large standing armies
 - Monarchs no longer relied on mercenary or noble armies as had been the case in the 15th century and earlier
 7. Employed a secret police to weaken political opponents
 8. Foreshadowed totalitarianism in 20th century but lacked financial, technological and military resources of 20th century dictators (like Stalin & Hitler).
 - a. Absolute monarchs usually did not require total mass participation in support of the monarch's goals
 - This is in stark contrast to totalitarian programs such as collectivization in Russia and the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany.
 - b. Those who did not overtly oppose the state were usually left alone by the government

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C. Philosophy of absolutism

1. **Jean Bodin** (1530-96)
 - a. Among the first to provide a theoretical basis for absolutist states
 - b. Wrote during the chaos of the French Civil Wars of the late 16th century
 - c. Believed that only absolutism could provide order and force people to obey the government
2. **Thomas Hobbes** (1588-1679): **Leviathan** (1651)
 - a. Pessimistic view of human beings in a **state of nature**:
 - "Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short strong"
 - Anarchy results
 - Central drive in every person is power
 - b. His ideas became most closely identified with Voltaire in the 18th century: "Enlightened Despotism"
 - c. Hobbes ideas were not very popular in the 17th century
 - Hobbes did not favor "divine right" of kings, as was favored by Louis XIV in France and James I and Charles I in England
 - Those with constitutional ideas saw Hobbes' ideas as too authoritarian
3. **Bishop Jacques Bossuet** (1627-1704)
 - a. Principle advocate of "**divine right of kings**" in France during the reign of Louis XIV.
 - b. Believed "divine right" meant that the king was placed on throne by God, and therefore owed his authority to no man or group

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II. The development of French Absolutism (c. 1589-1648)

A. France in the 17th century

1. In the feudal tradition, French society was divided into three *Estates* made up of various classes.
 - a. **First Estate**: clergy; 1% of population
 - b. **Second Estate**: nobility; 3-4% of population
 - c. **Third Estate**: *bourgeoisie* (middle class), artisans, urban workers, and peasants.
2. This hierarchy of social orders, based on rank and privilege, was restored under the reign of Henry IV.
3. France was primarily agrarian: 90% of population lived in the countryside.
4. Population of 17 million made France the largest country in Europe (20% of Europe's population).
 - Accounted for France becoming the strongest nation in Europe.

B. Henry IV (Henry of Navarre) (r.1589-1610)

1. Laid the foundation for France becoming the strongest European power in the 17th century.
 - a. Strengthened the social hierarchy by strengthening government institutions: *parlements*, the treasury, universities and the Catholic Church
 - b. First king to actively encourage French colonization in the New World: stimulated the Atlantic trade
2. First king of the **Bourbon dynasty**
 - a. Came to power in 1589 as part of a political compromise to end the French Civil Wars.
 - b. Converted from Calvinism to Catholicism in order to gain recognition from Paris of his reign.
 - c. Issued Edict of Nantes in 1598 providing a degree of religious toleration to the Huguenots (Calvinists)
3. Weakening of the nobility
 - a. The old **"nobility of the sword"** not allowed to influence the royal council
 - b. Many of the "nobility of the robe", new nobles who purchased their titles from the monarchy, became high officials in the government and remained loyal to the king (e.g. Sully).
4. **Duke of Sully** (1560-1641): Finance minister
 - a. His reforms enhanced the power of the monarchy
 - b. **Mercantilism**: increased role of the state in the economy in order to achieve a favorable balance of trade with other countries
 - Granted monopolies in the production of gunpowder and salt
 - Encouraged manufacturing of silk and tapestries
 - Only the government could operate the mines
 - c. Reduced royal debt
 - Systematic bookkeeping and budgets
 - In contrast, Spain was drowning in debt
 - d. Reformed the tax system to make it more equitable and efficient.
 - e. Oversaw improved transportation
 - Began nation-wide highway system
 - Canals linked major rivers
 - Began canal to link the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean
5. Henry was assassinated in 1610 by a fanatical monk who sought revenge for Henry's granting religious protections for the Huguenots.
 - a. Led to a severe crisis in power
 - b. Henry's widow, Marie de' Medici, ruled as regent until their son came of age.

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C. **Louis XIII** (1610-43)

1. As a youth, his regency was beset by corruption & mismanagement
 - a. Feudal nobles and princes increased their power
 - b. Certain nobles convinced him to assume power and exile his mother

2. **Cardinal Richelieu** (1585-1642)

- a. Laid foundation for absolutism in France
 - Like Henry IV, he was a **politique** (he placed political issues ahead of religious principles)
- b. **Intendant System**
 - Used to weaken the nobility
 - Replaced local officials with civil servants—intendants—who reported directly to the king
 - Intendants were largely middle-class or minor nobles (“nobility of the robe”)
 - Each of the country’s 32 districts had an intendant responsible for justice, police and finance
 - Gov’t became more efficient and centrally controlled
- c. Built upon Sully’s economic achievements in further developing mercantilism
- d. Increased taxation to fund the military
- e. Tax policies were not as successfully as Sully’s
 - Resorted to old system of selling offices
 - Tax farmers ruthlessly exploited the peasantry
- f. Richelieu subdued the Huguenots
 - **Peace of Alais** (1629): Huguenots lost their fortified cities & Protestant armies
 - Calvinist aristocratic influence reduced
 - Huguenots still allowed to practice Calvinism

3. Thirty Years’ War

- a. Richelieu and Louis XIII sought to weaken the Hapsburg Empire (a traditional French policy dating back to Francis I in the early 16th century)
 - Reversed Maria de’ Medici’s pro-Spanish policy
 - Declared war against Spain in 1635
- b. France supported Gustavus Adolphus with money during the “Swedish Phase” of the war
- c. Later, France entered the “International Phase” of the war and ultimately forced the Treaty of Westphalia on the Hapsburgs

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IV. **Louis XIV** (r. 1643-1715) – the “Sun King”

A. Quintessential absolute ruler in European history

1. Personified the idea that sovereignty of the state resides in the ruler
 - a. **“L’ état, c’est moi”** (“I am the state”)
 - b. He became known as the **“Sun King”** since he was at the center of French power (just as the sun is the center of our solar system).
2. Strong believer in **“divine right” of kings** (advocated by **Bishop Bossuet**)
3. He had the longest reign in European history (72 years)
 - Inherited the throne when he was 5 years old from his father Louis XIII (Henry IV was his grandfather)
4. France became the undisputed major power in Europe during his reign
 - a. French population was the largest in Europe (17 million); accounted for 20% of Europe’s population
 - Meant that a massive standing army could be created and maintained
 - b. French culture dominated Europe
 - The French language became the international language in Europe for over two centuries and the language of the well-educated (as Latin had been during the Middle Ages)
 - France became the epicenter of literature and the arts until the 20th century

B. The **Fronde** (mid-late 1640s)

1. **Cardinal Mazarin** (1602-1661) controlled France while Louis XIV was a child
2. Some nobles revolted against Mazarin when Louis was between the ages of 5 and 11.
3. Competition among various noble factions enabled Mazarin to defeat the nobles.
4. Louis never forgot the humiliation he faced at the hands of the nobles early on and was determined to control the nobility.

C. Government organization

1. Louis recruited his chief ministers from the middle class in order to keep the aristocracy out of government
2. Continued the *intendant* system begun by Richelieu
3. Checked the power of French institutions that might resist his control
 - a. *Parlements* were fearful of resisting him after the failure of the *Fronde*
 - b. Officials who criticized the government could be arrested
 - c. Louis never called the *Estates General* into session
4. Control over the peasantry (which accounted for about 95% of the population)
 - a. Some peasants kept as little as 20% of their cash crops after paying their landlord, government taxes and tithes to the Church
 - b. **Corvée**: forced labor that required peasants to work for a month out of the year on roads and other public projects
 - c. Idle peasants could be conscripted into the army or forced into workhouses
 - d. Rebellious peasants could be executed or used as galley slaves on ships

D. **Versailles Palace**

1. Under Louis XIV, the Palace at Versailles became the grandest and most impressive palace in all of Europe
 - a. The awe-inspiring scale of the palace reinforced his image as the most powerful absolute ruler in Europe.
 - b. The palace had originally been a hunting lodge for his father, Louis XIII.
 - c. The Baroque architecture was largely work of Marquis Louvois; the gardens were designed by LeVau
 - d. The façade was about 1/3 of a mile long; 1,400 fountains adorned the grounds
 - e. The royal court grew from about 600 people (when the king had lived in Paris) to about 10,000 people at Versailles
 - f. The cost of maintaining Versailles cost about 60% of all royal revenues!



The Hall of Mirrors
inside Versailles Palace

2. Versailles Palace became in effect a pleasure prison for the French nobility
 - a. Louis gained absolute control over the nobility
 - b. Fearful of noble intrigue, Louis required nobles to live at the palace for several months each year in order to keep an eye on them
 - c. Nobles were entertained with numerous recreational activities such as tournaments, hunts and concerts
 - Elaborate theatrical performances included the works of Racine and Moliere

E. Religious Policies

1. Louis considered himself the head of the Gallican Church (French Catholic Church)
 - While he was very religious, he did not allow the pope to exercise political power in the French Church
2. **Edict of Fountainbleau (1685)**—revoked Edict of Nantes
 - a. Huguenots lost their right to practice Calvinism
 - b. About 200,000 Huguenots fled France for England, Holland and the English colonies in North America
3. Louis supported the Jesuits in cracking down on **Jansenists** (Catholics who held some Calvinist ideas)

F. **Mercantilism**

1. State control over a country's economy in order to achieve a favorable balance of trade with other countries.
 - **Bullionism: a nation's policy of accumulating as much precious metal (gold and silver) as possible while preventing its outward flow to other countries.**
2. French mercantilism reached its height under Louis' finance minister, **Jean Baptiste Colbert** (1661-1683)
3. Colbert's goal was economic self-sufficiency for France
 - a. Oversaw the construction of roads & canals
 - b. Granted gov't-supported monopolies in certain industries.
 - c. Cracked down on guilds
 - d. Reduced local tolls (internal tariffs) that inhibited trade
 - e. Organized French trading companies for international trade (East India Co., West India Co.)

4. By 1683, France was Europe's leading industrial country
 - a. Excelled in such industries as textiles, mirrors, lace-making and foundries for steel manufacturing and firearms.
 - b. Colbert's most important accomplishment: developing the merchant marine
5. Weaknesses of mercantilism and the French economy
 - a. Poor peasant conditions (esp. taxation) resulted in large emigration out of France
 - b. Louis opted for creating a massive army instead of a formidable navy
 - Result: France later lost naval wars with England
 - c. War in later years of Louis' reign nullified Colbert's gains
 - Louis was at war for 2/3 of his reign

V. Wars of Louis XIV

A. Overview

1. Wars were initially successful but eventually became economically ruinous to France
2. France developed the professional modern army
3. Perhaps the first time in modern European history that one country was able to dominate politics
4. A balance of power system emerged
 - a. No one country would be allowed to dominate the continent since a coalition of other countries would rally against a threatening power.
 - b. Dutch stadtholder William of Orange (later King William III of England) was the most important figure in thwarting Louis' expansionism

B. War of Devolution (First Dutch War), 1667-68

1. Louis XIV invaded the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium) without declaring war.
2. Louis received 12 fortified towns on the border of the Spanish Netherlands but gave up the Franche-Comté (Burgundy)

C. Second Dutch War (1672-78)

1. Louis invaded the southern Netherlands as revenge for Dutch opposition in the previous war.
2. Peace of Nijmegen (1678-79)
 - a. Represented the furthest limit to the expansion of Louis XIV.
 - b. France took Franche-Comté from Spain, gained some Flemish towns and took Alsace

D. War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97)

1. In response to another invasion of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis XIV in 1683, the League of Augsburg formed in 1686: HRE, Spain, Sweden, Bavaria, Saxony, Dutch Republic
 - Demonstrated emergence of balance of power
2. William of Orange (now king of England) brought England in against France.
 - Began a period of Anglo-French military rivalry that lasted until Napoleon's defeat in 1815.
 - (Study Device: This could be viewed as a "second Hundred Years' War": 1689-1815)
3. War ended with the status quo prior to the war
 - France remained in control of Alsace and the city of Strasbourg (in Lorraine).

E. War of Spanish Succession (1701-13)

1. Cause: The will of Charles II (Hapsburg king) gave all Spanish territories to the grandson of Louis XIV
 - European powers feared that Louis would consolidate the thrones of France and Spain, thus creating a monster power that would upset the balance of power
2. Grand Alliance emerged in opposition to France: England, Dutch Republic, HRE, Brandenburg, Portugal, Savoy
3. Battle of Blenheim (1704)
 - a. A turning point in the war that began a series of military defeats for France
 - b. England's army, led by the Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill—ancestor of the 20th century leader Winston Churchill) and military forces of Savoy (representing the HRE) were victorious
4. **Treaty of Utrecht (1713)**
 - a. Most important treaty between the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) and the Treaty of Paris (1763)
 - Maintained the balance of power in Europe
 - Ended the expansionism of Louis XIV
 - b. Spanish possessions were partitioned
 - Britain was the biggest winner
 - Gained the *asiento* (slave trade) from Spain and the right to send one English ship to trade in Spain's New World empire
 - Gained the Spanish territories of Gibraltar and Minorca.
 - Belgium (Spanish Netherlands) given to Austria
 - Netherlands gain some land as a buffer against future French aggression

- c. Though Louis' grandson was enthroned in Spain, the unification of the Spanish and Bourbon dynasties was prohibited.
 - d. Kings were recognized as such in Sardinia (Savoy) and Prussia (Brandenburg)
- F. Costs of Louis XIV's wars:
- 1. Destroyed the French economy
 - 2. 20% of the French subjects died
 - 3. Huge debt would be placed on the shoulders of the Third Estate
 - French gov't was bankrupt
 - 4. Financial and social tensions would sow the seeds of the French Revolution later in the century.

VI. The Spanish Empire in the 17th Century

- A. "The Golden Age of Spain" in the 16th century
- 1. The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella began the process of centralizing power ("New Monarchs").
 - 2. The foundation for absolutism in Spain was laid by Charles V (1519-1556) and Phillip II
 - 3. Spain's power reached its zenith under Philip II (r.1556-1598)
 - a. Madrid (in Castile) became the capital of Spain
 - b. Built the **Escorial Palace** to demonstrate his power
 - c. A command economy developed in Madrid
 - d. Numerous rituals of court etiquette reinforced the king's power
 - 4. The Spanish Inquisition continued to persecute those seen as heretics (especially Jews and Moors)
- B. Decline of the Spanish economy in the 17th century
- 1. The Spanish economy was hurt by the loss of the middle class Moors and Jews
 - Population of Spain shrank from 7.5 million in 1550 to 5.5 million in 1660.
 - 2. Spanish trade with its colonies fell 60% between 1610 and 1660
 - Largely due to English and Dutch competition.
 - 3. The Spanish treasury was bankrupt and had to repudiate its debts at various times between 1594 and 1680.
 - 4. National taxes hit the peasantry particularly hard
 - a. Many peasants were driven from the countryside and swelled the ranks of the poor in cities.
 - b. Food production decreased as a result

5. Inflation from the “**price revolution**” hurt domestic industries that were unable to export goods.
6. A poor work ethic stunted economic growth
 - a. Upper classes eschewed work and continued a life of luxury.
 - b. Many noble titles were purchased; provided tax exemptions for the wealthy
 - c. Capitalism was not really prevalent (as it was in the Netherlands and England)

C. Political and military decline

1. Symbolically, England’s defeat of the **Spanish Armada** in **1588** is seen by some historians as the beginning of the decline of the Spanish empire.
 - However, Spain had the most formidable military until the mid-17th century.
2. Poor leadership by three successive kings in the 17th century damaged Spain’s political power
 - Philip III, Philip IV and Charles II (one of worst rulers in Hapsburg history)
3. Spain’s defeat in Thirty Years’ War was politically and economically disastrous
 - a. Spain officially lost the Netherlands
 - b. 1640, Portugal reestablished its independence.
4. **Treaty of the Pyrenees** (1659): marked end of Spain as a Great Power
 - a. War between Spain and France continued for 11 years after the end of the Thirty Years’ War
 - b. Spain lost parts of the Spanish Netherlands and territory in northern Spain to France
5. By 1700, the Spanish navy had only 8 ships and most of its army consisted of foreigners.
6. The War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713) resulted in Spain losing most of its European possessions at the Treaty of Utrecht

VII. **The Baroque** (see also Unit 2.1)

A. Reflected the age of absolutism

1. Began in Catholic Reformation countries to teach in a concrete and emotional way and demonstrate the glory and power of the Catholic Church (see Unit 2.1)
 - a. Encouraged by the papacy and the Jesuits
 - b. Prominent in France, Flanders, Austria, southern Germany and Poland
2. Spread later to Protestant countries such as the Netherlands and northern Germany and England

3. Characteristics

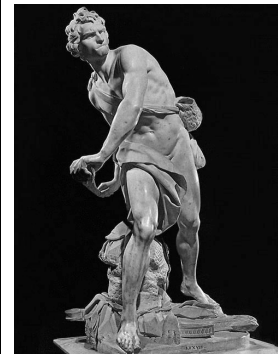
- a. Sought to overwhelm the viewer: Emphasized grandeur, emotion, movement, spaciousness and unity surrounding a certain theme
- b. Versailles Palace typifies baroque architecture: huge frescoes unified around the emotional impact of a single theme.

B. Architecture and sculpture

1. Baroque architecture reflected the image and power of absolute monarchs and the Catholic Church
2. **Gianlorenzo Bernini** (1598-1650) personified baroque architecture and sculpture
 - a. Colonnade for the piazza in front of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome was his greatest architectural achievement.
 - b. He sculpted the incredible canopy over the high altar of St. Peter's Cathedral
 - c. His altarpiece sculpture, *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, evokes tremendous emotion
 - d. His statue of *David* (see right) shows movement and emotion
 - e. Constructed several fountains throughout Rome
3. **Versailles Palace** built during the reign of Louis XIV is the quintessential baroque structure
4. Hapsburg emperor Leopold I built **Schönbrunn** in Austria in response to the Versailles Palace
5. Peter the Great in Russia built the **Winter Palace** in St. Petersburg largely on the influence of Versailles
6. Frederick I in Prussia began building his palace in Berlin in 1701

C. Baroque painting

1. Characteristics
 - a. Strong sense of emotion and movement
 - b. Stressed broad areas of light and shadow rather than on linear arrangements of the High Renaissance.
 - Tenebrism ("dark manner"): extreme contrast between dark to light
 - c. Color was an important element as it appealed to the senses and more true to nature.
 - d. Not concerned with clarity of detail as with overall dynamic effect.
 - e. Designed to give a spontaneous personal experience.



Bernini, *David*



Schönbrunn

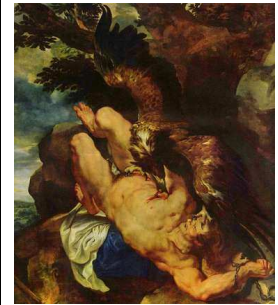


Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, Russia

2. **Caravaggio** (1571-1610), Italian painter (Rome)
 - a. Perhaps 1st important painter of the Baroque era
 - b. Depicted highly emotional scenes
 - c. Sharp contrasts of light and dark to create drama.
 - d. Criticized by some for using ordinary people as models for his depictions of Biblical scenes
3. **Peter Paul Rubens** (1577-1640), Flemish painter
 - a. Worked much for the Hapsburg court in Brussels (the capital of the Spanish Netherlands)
 - b. Emphasized color and sensuality; animated figures and melodramatic contrasts; monumental size.
 - c. Nearly half of his works dealt with Christian subjects.
 - d. Known for his sensual nudes as Roman goddesses, water nymphs, and saints and angels.
4. **Diego Velázquez** (1599-1660)
 - a. Perhaps the greatest court painter of the era
 - b. Numerous portraits of the Spanish court and their surroundings
5. **Artemisia Gentileschi** (1593-1652)
 - Famous for vivid depictions of dramatic scenes and her "Judith" paintings

D. The Dutch Style

1. Characteristics
 - a. Did not fit the Baroque style of trying to overwhelm the viewer
 - b. Reflected the Dutch Republic's wealth and religious toleration of secular subjects
 - c. Reflected the urban and rural settings of Dutch life during the "Golden Age of the Netherlands"
 - d. Many works were commissioned by merchants or government organizations
2. **Rembrandt van Rijn** (1606-1669), painter
 - a. Perhaps the greatest of all Baroque artists although he doesn't fit neatly into any category.
 - b. Scenes covered an enormous range throughout his career
 - c. Used extremes of light and dark in the Baroque style: tenebrism
 - d. His works were far more intimate and psychological than typical Baroque works
 - e. Painted with the restraint of the classicist style
3. **Jan Vermeer** (1632-1675)
 - Paintings specialized in simple domestic interior scenes of ordinary people
 - Like Rembrandt, he was a master in the use of light



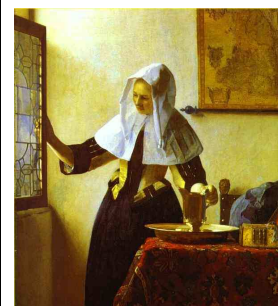
Peter Paul Rubens,
Prometheus Bound,
1611-12



Artemisia Gentileschi,
Judith Beheading Holofernes, 1620



Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lecture*, 1632



Vermeer, *Woman with a Water Jug*, 1665

4. Frans Hals (1580-1666)
 - Portraits of middle-class people and militia companies

E. French Classicism

1. **Nicolas Poussin** (1593-1665), painter
 - a. Paintings rationally organized to achieve harmony and balance; even his landscapes are orderly.
 - b. Focused early on classical scenes from antiquity or Biblical scenes.
 - c. Later focused on landscape painting
 - d. His style is not typical baroque
 - e. Painted temporarily in the court of Louis XIII.
2. **Jean Racine** (1639-1699), dramatist
 - a. His plays (along with Moliere's) were often funded by Louis XIV
 - b. Plays were written in the classical style (e.g. adherence to the three unities)
 - c. Wrote some of the most intense emotional works for the stage.
3. **Jean-Baptiste Moliere** (1622-1673), dramatist
 - a. His plays often focused on social struggles
 - b. Made fun of the aristocracy, upper bourgeoisie and high church officials



Poussin, *The Arcadian Shepherds*, 1627

F. Baroque Music

1. Characteristics
 - a. Belief that the text should dominate the music; the lyrics and libretto were most important
 - b. Baroque composers developed the modern system of major-minor tonalities.
 - c. Dissonance was used much more freely than during the Renaissance
2. Claudio Monteverdi (1547-1643) developed the opera and the modern orchestra
 - *Orfeo* (1607) is his masterpiece—the first opera
3. **J. S. Bach** (1685-1750)
 - a. Greatest of the baroque composers
 - b. Often wrote dense and polyphonic structures (in contrast to the later balance and restraint of the Classical Period—Mozart & Haydn)
 - c. Wrote in a variety of genres, both choral and instrumental, for a variety of instruments
 - e.g. masses, organ works, concertos
 - d. Extremely prolific
4. George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
 - a. Like Bach, wrote in a variety of genres
 - b. His masterpiece is the oratorio *The Messiah*

Terms to Know

absolutism
Jean Bodin
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Bishop Bossuet
"divine right" of kings
First Estate
Second Estate
Third Estate
Henry IV
Bourbon dynasty
nobility of the sword
nobility of the robe
Duke of Sully
Louis XIII
Cardinal Richelieu
politique
Intendant system
Peace of Alais
Louis XIV, "Sun King"
"L' état, c'est moi"
Fronde
Cardinal Mazarin
corvee
Versailles Palace
Edict of Fountainbleu
Jansenists
mercantilism
bullionism

Jean-Baptiste Colbert
balance of power
War of the League of Augsburg
War of Spanish Succession
Treaty of Utrecht
Philip II
Escorial
"price revolution"
Spanish Armada
Treaty of the Pyrenees, 1659
Baroque
Bernini
Versailles Palace
Schönbrunn
Winter Palace
Carvaggio
Peter Paul Rubens
Diego Velázquez
Artemisia Gentileschi
Dutch Style
Rembrandt
Jan Vermeer
French Classicism
Nicolas Poussin
Jean Baptiste Racine
Moliere
J.S. Bach

Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 12 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some practice questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. How did the political theories of Bodin and Bossuet play out in France during the 17th century?
2. Analyze the extent to which absolutism developed in France under Henry IV and Louis XIII.
3. Analyze the ways in which the absolutism of Louis XIV impacted the bureaucracy, the nobility, the peasantry, economics and religious issues in France.
4. To what extent did the balance of power remain intact in Europe between 1600 and 1715?
5. Analyze the role of mercantilism in France in the 17th century
6. Analyze how the baroque reflected the "Age of Absolutism."

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